

# For the Teacher: Space Talk

Text features to note and sample activities

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| <p><b>Features of a play text</b></p>                                  | <p>Ask, <i>What is a play? How is a play text different from a story text?</i> A play is a text that is spoken aloud by actors on the stage, on television or on radio.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has a list of characters—the “cast”.</li> <li>• It is a narrative told in direct speech.</li> <li>• Each character’s turn to speak is indicated by the name before the words.</li> <li>• The characters speak in the present tense.</li> <li>• Direct speech is not enclosed in quotation marks.</li> <li>• It may include stage directions and suggestions for props, costumes and scenery. It may also be divided into acts and/or scenes.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Additional features of this play</b></p>                         | <p><b>Setting</b><br/>A spaceship on a mission to Earth. <i>What might a spaceship from another planet be like? What would you like to find out on a visit to space?</i></p> <p><b>Characters</b><br/>The crew of a spaceship and a storyteller. <i>How might a creature from space be different to a human? How might they be the same?</i></p> <p><b>Humour</b><br/>Aliens landing on Earth and being confused about traffic, the inhabitants and their language. <i>How might traffic change in the future? What might cities in the future be like?</i></p> <p><b>Visual literacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Futuristic elements in the pictures (e.g., spaceship and crew, city with busy traffic).</li> <li>• Aliens describe what they see but they “misinterpret” visual information.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Reading and responding</b></p>                                   | <p><i>Space Talk</i> can be used with groups of students at different reading levels. Multi-level shared reading groups provide the opportunity for more confident readers to support their less confident peers. Less confident readers will develop their confidence through repeated readings. By taking on different roles at different times, all students are motivated to read and re-read the text.</p> <p><b>Comprehension</b><br/>Encourage students to use a range of comprehension strategies to respond to the text. Some questions that help them to <b>create mental images</b> and <b>visualise</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What do we learn about the aliens’ planet when they call the grass “green hair”?</i></li> <li>• <i>How would you describe traffic if you couldn’t use the words “cars” and “trucks”?</i></li> <li>• <i>How might you feel if you suddenly came across a group of huge animals you had never seen before? What would you want to know about them?</i></li> <li>• <i>Imagine you are one of the cows that met the aliens. How would you describe the aliens to a friend?</i></li> <li>• <i>What information would you like to have about space exploration? How might you investigate this further?</i></li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Language/vocabulary exploration and development</b></p>          | <p><b>Descriptive language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose something you can see out the window. Write a description as though you don’t know what it is or what it is used for.</li> <li>• “Giant” and “big” are used in the story to describe the sizes of things. List all the words you know that mean <b>big</b>. Arrange them in order of the sizes they describe.</li> </ul> <p><b>Collective nouns:</b> “Herd” is the word (collective noun) for a group of cows. List four other animals that live in herds. Choose other animals and find their correct collective noun.</p>  |
| <p><b>Focus on sentences, words and letter-sound relationships</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite students to identify the orders in the text. Select one of the orders (e.g. “Officers, left turn!”) and rewrite it as a polite question (“Would you turn left, please, Officers?”). <i>How does the order of the words in the sentence change? How does the punctuation change?</i></li> <li>• “Commander” has three syllables. Have students find the six other three-syllable words in the text. Invite them to find the two words with four syllables (inhabited, storyteller).</li> <li>• Invite students to identify words in the play that have the long /i/ sound, and list them according to their spelling patterns.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Writing activities</b></p>                                       | <p>Extend students’ reading and understanding of play texts by having them create their own scripts from known texts (readers’ theatre) or write their own plays. Some ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The spaceship has landed in the middle of a football game.</i></li> <li>• <i>The spaceship has landed on a chicken farm.</i></li> <li>• <i>A little alien walks into your class and gets a big fright.</i></li> </ul>   |